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# Wisconsin Forestry Notes

July 2006

Wisconsin DNR - Division of Forestry

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## Summer Wildland Fire Activity Heats Up

*The recent hot and dry weather has meant an active summer fire season in Wisconsin so far. Typically, Wisconsin's peak fire season is in early spring.*

Wildland fires continue to be reported throughout Northern and Central Wisconsin this summer. With the lack of recent rainfall and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday week, the number of wildfires caused by fireworks has increased significantly and there have been fires from other human causes as well, particularly from recreational vehicle exhaust and campfires.

On average, 15-20 fires a day are occurring, necessitating mobilization of specialized firefighting equipment from around the state. Fire control staff have worked seven-day weeks since mid-June and through July to suppress these unwanted fires.

In order to reduce the number of debris-caused fires and increase the fire danger awareness, some fire managers are beginning to restrict burning permits until the dry soil conditions improve and the extended forecast shows some relief.

Wisconsin's typical fire season is early spring after snow melt, when vegetation is dry, humidity is low, winds are high, and residents are outside doing spring clean-up. Debris burning fires (leaves, brush and garbage) continue to be the number one cause of wildfires in Wisconsin. To date, nearly 1200 fires have burned 1650 acres in 2006 in DNR's protection area. Significantly more fires and acres have occurred in the coop area (see story on next page), where DNR does not have an initial attack presence.

If you have any questions or would like a copy of a 2005 report called "Wildland Fire in Wisconsin, Bringing Unique Opportunities and Challenges to Fruition," please contact [Blair Anderson](#) at 608-220-0168. To check out today's fire danger in your area, visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/Fire/>

## Wisconsin Nursery Grower's Field Day

*DNR recently hosted an idea-sharing session at the state nursery in Wisconsin Rapids for nursery growers from throughout the state.*

The [Wisconsin State Nurseries](#) hosted the first-ever Nursery Grower's Field Day on June 27<sup>th</sup> at the Griffith State Nursery in Wisconsin Rapids. The day-long workshop provided an opportunity for private and public reforestation nurseries to learn about new technologies and exchange ideas on successful nursery practices.

Victor Vankus of the US Forest Service National Seed Lab presented a hands-on session about tree seed testing and participants tested their own seed lots for viability. Joe VandeHey, Wilson State Nursery Supervisor, presented the latest research on the use of slow release fertilizers in bare root nurseries. Kyoko Scanlon, WDNR Forest Pathologist, instructed participants on the identification and control of diseases found in tree nurseries. The successful day concluded in the Griffith Nursery fields with a discussion on nursery management practices. The consensus of participants was that, through the sharing of ideas, everyone learned something to improve their nursery operation and ultimately improve Wisconsin's reforestation efforts. For more information, contact [Greg Edge](#).

# Cooperative Forest Fire Initiative

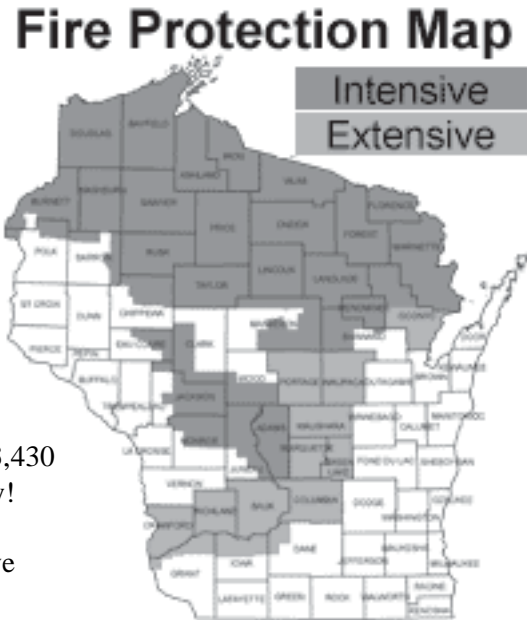
*DNR offers training and financial assistance to local fire departments in the areas of the state shown in white on the map. The 671 towns and 527 local fire departments in these “cooperative” areas provide forest fire protection on 13.7 million acres in Wisconsin.*

The forest fire protection in the state of Wisconsin is currently organized into three types of protection; intensive, extensive and cooperative. Cooperative (Co-op) forest fire protection areas (**as shown in white on this map**) rely on the Town Boards and the local fire departments to provide forest fire protection.

Some of the major issues affecting cooperative fire protection areas include urban sprawl increasing the wildland-urban interface problem, major forest fires in these areas and the lack of training in wildland fire fighting tactics for local fire departments. A recent survey showed that local cooperative area fire departments are responding to 3,430 forest fires burning 24,557 acres annually!

To begin to meet the needs of cooperative area fire departments, the Division of Forestry initiated a forest fire training program in January 2005. This program to date has trained 3,200 firefighters from 130 cooperative area fire departments in the basics of safety, organization and suppression of forest fires. In addition to training, local fire departments can also be eligible for [Forest Fire Protection Grants](#), a 50/50 cost share grant utilizing state and federal monies to improve fire department capabilities in suppressing forest fires. In 2005, this grant program distributed \$812,000 to 290 fire departments.

To learn more about the cooperative fire program, visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/fire/firedepttrain.htm> or contact [Chris Klahn](#), Cooperative Fire Specialist, at (608) 297-2214.



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**“Wisconsin Forestry Notes”** is a monthly electronic publication highlighting programs and activities of the Wisconsin DNR - Division of Forestry, Box 7921, Madison, Wisconsin 53707  
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